



News Release



For Immediate Release:

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BLM and New Mexico Association of Counties Sign Agreement to ‘Bring Government Closer to the People’

Santa Fe – BLM Director Kathleen Clarke and Rebecca Bustamante, President of the New Mexico Association of Counties Board of Directors, (NMAC) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing a framework for the agencies to work on issues of mutual concern, in order to benefit local communities throughout the State.

The Bureau of Land Management has selected Joyce Fierro, Special Assistant for Intergovernmental Partnerships, as a full-time liaison for BLM to work at the NMAC office in Santa Fe. Fierro will lead efforts to identify opportunities with counties and rural communities to maintain or improve their economic vitality.

BLM and NMAC will identify projects for improving natural resource stewardship, including joint efforts such as woodland health, fire projects and grants, and other efforts to help the BLM and local communities achieve shared objectives.

Rebecca Bustamante, President of the New Mexico Association of Counties, stated, "The fact that BLM manages millions of acres of public lands, all which are within county boundaries in New Mexico, underlines the necessity to work with BLM and other federal entities to efficiently manage our public resources."

"Many of the issues BLM deals with involve and affect local communities," said Linda S.C. Rundell, State Director of the BLM for New Mexico. "Our vision is to bring government closer to the people, so that the needs of public land users and their communities are better incorporated into our management of New Mexico's 13.4 million acres of public lands."

The agreement will help BLM change how it does land use plans, Rundell added. "We'd like people to get more involved in helping define resource issues and management alternatives."

Fierro has been with BLM 28 years and brings a diverse knowledge of its programs. Her expertise in establishing and enhancing intergovernmental partnerships will contribute to encouraging dialogue and fostering participation among counties, other federal agencies, tribal and State natural resource and land management agencies in key areas of concern to counties.